

outside the *Jhilmils* something of a fee-faw-fum character. Stripes was wide awake and the coolies, up a tree, were wide awake also. He didn't sleep much that night I tell you.' In 1907, a tiger was shot at Pir Pau, Trombay, near Sandow Castle by Mr. Mullan of the Bombay Port Trust. This with the one cited above are the most recent records.

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VI.—THE TIGER'S METHOD OF MAKING A 'KILL'

(With a photo)

I had the good fortune this year to witness, by the light of the moon nearly at the full, the killing of a tethered buffalo by a tigress.

The near approach of the tigress was made known to me at 10 o'clock by the sudden uprising of the buffalo from his quiet chewing of the cud. He stared into the forest. Then the tread of the tigress—who had given up all concealment as she knew her prey could not now escape her—was heard among the leaves. The head of the great feline came into the field of view of the binoculars, her fine ruff—for she possessed an unusually large one—shining conspicuously in the brilliant rays of the moon. I could see every whisker and hair on her face.

Slowly the whole of her lithe but massive form came into view, advancing by short steps, with every muscle taut and alert for instant action. The tethered bait, which had up to now remained motionless, staring at the dread apparition, made a sudden effort to break loose. That was the signal which launched the tigress to the attack. There was a short scuffle, a choked beilow, and then absolute silence as the tigress stood, the back of the buffalo's neck in the vise of her jaws. All but her head was in the shadow of the tree, but I could make out that she was straddled across the body of the buffalo. What she did with her paws could not be made out, there was no apparent movement but presently I heard the crack, and the crack, of the breaking of the vertebræ of the victim's neck.

Now, the killing finished, the tigress opened her jaws and the lifeless body of the victim fell with a helpless flop on to the ground. A few moments she stood, wholly alert to her surroundings and gazing this way and that. Then she seized the body by the hindquarters to drag it away; after several tremendous tugs she gave up the attempt and, squatting at the tail end of the carcass, now stretched to the full length of the wire tethering rope, commenced to tear it open. This took but a second or two, and with great gulps she began the hot meal she had so easily obtained.

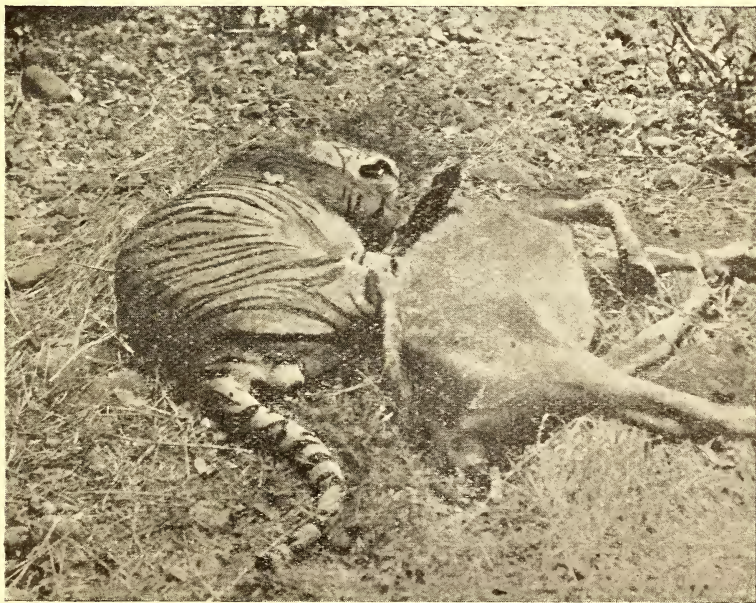
In ten minutes she suddenly got up and went straight off into the forest behind her. She appeared drunk with her success, or the rich wine with her dinner, for she made no attempt at quiet progress, barging through the jungle with a crashing of undergrowth

and leaves. All sorts of noises she made ; gruntings, belchings, and noises difficult to describe. The sound of her noisy progress died away and all was again quiet, the absolute stillness of the tropic night in the forest. There had been at no time—not even before her approach to the buffalo—any indication on the part of the numerous denizens of the jungle that the tigress was on the move ; and there was a similar silence on her departure.

It was six hours before she returned, which she did in absolute silence and without any forest warnings. Down she sat and recommenced her meal. I turned on the distant light which was directly over her head. Of this she took no notice ; but when, her exact position clearly ascertained, the torch fixed on the rifle was flashed in her face she lifted her head, her eyes shining like emerald lamps. Next moment she was dead ; and the loud sigh of the breath leaving her body came to my ears in the stillness of the night as the reverberations of the rifle shot died away in the distance.

A few weeks later a tiger met instantaneous death in the act of killing a tethered bait. There was no moon ; he was a most wary and cunning beast, and to have put on the distant light when the scuffle began might have scared him away. I could take no chances. The torch showed him standing by the side of the '*boda*' with the back of its neck in his jaws. He was facing away from me.

To the shot he fell on his side ; and so instantaneous was his death that the claws of his left forepaw remained hooked into the right cheek of the buffalo, and the victim's hind legs were kicking in the death struggle after the tail of the slayer had ceased to beat



THE TIGER AND ITS KILL

the ground. Only his jaws had quitted their hold, and I saw them open and close in convulsive gasps.

All four legs of the tiger were underneath the body of the buffalo as it fell, as can be seen in the photograph taken early in the morning. In this case the tiger had not straddled his legs over the kill, but stood by its side, his hind legs well under him. He was slain before he had time to break the neck of his victim.

To have attempted to beat out this tiger would have been useless. It could not be known where he would lie up, and the villagers were a timid crowd. Two of my *bodas* this tiger had killed with impunity; so I was determined he should not escape. It was on the eighth night in the machan that I slew him. That he would return along that path in the river bed was certain; and it is just as comfortable, and far more interesting, to sleep in a large machan bed as in one's camp!

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June 1, 1929.

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VII.—AN EXPERIENCE WITH A TIGRESS

The following experience with a tigress may interest the readers of your Journal:

We were shooting in the Central Provinces. As no beaters were obtainable, we spent mornings and evenings in silently stalking along the game paths that crossed the jungle in every direction. One afternoon about 4 o'clock we started with our shikaris as usual, going in Indian file along a small path flanked by high grass and scattered bushes. After proceeding for some distance, we heard a low humming sound in front which brought our party to a stop. The lady member of the party told us afterwards that she took the sound as coming from a swarm of bees which abounded in the jungle. This, however, was a momentary illusion as the sound quickly gathered volume and, with a loud roar, a tigress charged out of the grass and came down the path in our direction. At a distance of some 12 or 15 yards she suddenly checked her rush, stopped dead for a moment slightly sideways and evidently with the intention of turning away. This was the opportunity for placing a shot and the next instant, with a bound, she disappeared in the grass again, leaving us standing on the path surprised and wondering whether we had seen the last of her.

As nothing further happened, we wisely decided to put off further investigations till the next day when we found the tigress dead some little distance away. We also discovered the reason for her aggressive behaviour. In a bush near by we found the remains of a sambhar which she must have killed the night before. She was lying up near it with the intention of having another meal and resenting our interference, she tried to scare us away. In other words, the old lady was merely bluffing, she did not mean to charge at all.